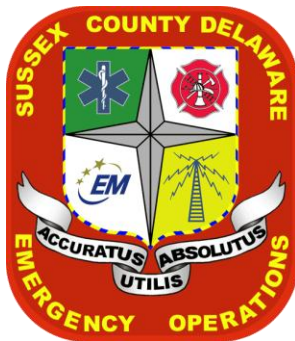


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## Sussex County assesses the damage in wake of Hurricane Irene

*Cleanup and recovery beginning today; travel restrictions lifted by governor, allowing residents and property owners to return*

**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

**1100 Hours, Sunday  
Aug. 28, 2011**

Sussex County this Sunday morning has emerged from the fury of Hurricane Irene in relatively good shape, though some tidal flooding on area roadways and isolated damage from a possible tornado in one community will make for some busy days ahead as the cleanup task begins.

Gov. Jack A. Markell has lifted Delaware's mandatory evacuation order and travel restriction, allowing residents to begin migrating back to homes and businesses that were left behind as the season's first significant tropical threat zeroed in on the East Coast.

The Delaware Department of Transportation reports that most roads and bridges in Sussex County are passable this morning. However, some communities along the Delaware Bay coastline, including Slaughter Beach, Prime Hook and Broadkill Beach, have water on roadways, and may be limited or inaccessible to motorists. Early reports indicate Prime Hook Road is washed out in some sections and may be impassable for a prolonged period.

Meantime, access on other roads that are now water-covered should improve as floodwaters recede in the hours ahead. Crews are working to remove sand from Del. Route 1 near the Indian River Inlet Bridge so that traffic can begin flowing along that critical highway.

"It doesn't look like we experienced the significant flooding forecasters were predicting, and the damage is certainly not widespread and

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catastrophic. So that's the great new in all of this," said Joseph L. Thomas, director of the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center. "We are very fortunate to have come out of this like we have. But there is work ahead, and it will take time before life gets back to normal for everyone."

Delaware has received a federal disaster declaration, which paves the way for the State to receive federal assistance – depending on the amount of damage – to cover costs related to the storm and subsequent cleanup.

First responders and emergency managers are continuing damage assessments now that Hurricane Irene is exiting the region. At this hour, it appears most damage throughout the county has been limited to downed trees and power lines, roof leaks, and minor tidal flooding.

The county did not escape unscathed, though. The most substantial damage appears to be in and around the Nassau Station and Tradewind Estates subdivisions southwest of Lewes, where fire company officials report as many as 50 structures have sustained some type of damage from a possible tornado Saturday evening. Some of the homes, according to fire officials, are beyond repair.

The National Weather Service will have to make the final determination as to whether the damage was the result of a tornado.

While residents and property owners can begin making their way home, Sussex County and the American Red Cross of the Delmarva Peninsula will keep four shelters in the area open as long as necessary, Mr. Thomas said. The shelters would be for those residents and property owners who cannot return home, either because of flooding or damage to their properties.

The shelters designated for Sussex County evacuees are:

**Beacon Middle School**  
**19482 John J. Williams Hwy.**  
**Lewes, DE**  
**(NO PETS)**

**Indian River H. S.**  
**29772 Armory Road**  
**Dagsboro, DE**  
**(Pets Accepted)**

**Milford High School**  
**1019 N. Walnut St.**  
**Milford, DE**  
**(Pets Accepted)**

**Sussex Tech H. S.**  
**17099 County Seat Hwy.**  
**Georgetown, DE**  
**(Pets Accepted)**

The Sussex County EOC encourages residents and visitors to stay tuned to local media and the Sussex County EOC website at [www.sussexcountyde.gov/services/storm](http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/services/storm) for updates as they happen. The

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public can also follow the County's Twitter feeds at [www.twitter.com/sussex\\_pio](http://www.twitter.com/sussex_pio) and [www.twitter.com/sussexctyde\\_eoc](http://www.twitter.com/sussexctyde_eoc).

The public should also monitor the Delaware Department of Transportation at [www.deldot.gov](http://www.deldot.gov) for the latest travel updates.

For questions about the storm recovery, sheltering or other concerns, the public should call the Sussex County EOC's storm line at (302) 856-7366.

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**Media calls should be directed to EOC media contacts Chip Guy at (302) 858-0505, or Joe Hopple at (302) 856-3727.**